

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

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FIVE HUNDRED CASES OF FISTULA, PILES AND OTHER DISEASES OF THE RECTUM. By SAMUEL BENTON L. R. C. P., M. R. C. S. London: Henry Renshaw. 1886.

This little book contains the details, conveniently arranged in tabular form, of a selection from a series of 512 cases of rectal disease which have been treated by the author. The chatty introduction of some seventeen pages which precedes the "raison d'être" of the book, is worth reading for the purpose of showing the practical views held by the author upon the subject to which, for some time he has been devoting special attention. For example, he is emphatic in his advocacy of the treatment of hæmorrhoids by ligature, and he claims that the method fulfils all the requirements of the operative surgeon. Some of the cases, of which particulars are given, lead one to infer that the treatment of rectal disease does not come as a "boon and a blessing" to a certain section of practitioners. There are some details which point to the fact. Case 453 on page 21, is thus described. "This patient suffered great pain for some time, had been under several doctors, *but had not been examined.* (The italics are ours). Again, case 481, a man admitted for fistula and who was discharged cured in seventeen days; "had consulted four doctors, and before admission had been treated for piles. Lastly, case 40, a man cured after nine days' treatment of fistula, was "seven years ago operated on by a well-known advertising doctor; three months afterwards this gentleman had to repeat his operation, and the second time he found a needle near the anus." Why are we not told more about this needle? It inspires the same amount of curiosity which the discourse of an antiquarian saw bone is wont to excite. Whence came it? History relates not. It is presumable, however, that at the time of its removal a greater antiquity could be assigned to it than that which three months would confer. But in the absence of precise information everything, of course, is mere conjecture.

There are some useful remarks anent the preparation of patients for, and the treatment of rectal operations, together with the all important

question of the treatment of hæmorrhage in these cases; and the book concludes with the record of a case, in full detail, of colotomy for cancer of the rectum.

H. PERCY DUNN.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE IN IRELAND. Vol. iii.  
 Edited by WILLIAM THOMSON, M. A., F. R. C. S. I.

The third volume of the transactions of the Academy of Medicine in Ireland consists of a compendious selection of papers which maintains the high standard which was the distinguishing feature of the preceding volumes of this series. The publication of these transactions possesses an importance which will be readily acknowledged, inasmuch as they afford a good reflex of the surgery which is practiced in the Irish capital, as well as throughout Ireland. The surgical section opens with a paper on melanotic sarcoma of the rectum by Charles B. Ball. The removal of the growth by the usual method was accomplished without difficulty, and the patient was not troubled with the least incontinence afterwards; a fact which lends some support to the opinion of J. O'Beirne that the rectum is normally empty except at the time preceding the act of defæcation. In some interesting remarks which accompany the case Ball refers to the extreme rarity of the disease in question, and draws attention to Virchow's observation that the rectum is the only portion of the intestinal canal in which primary melanotic sarcoma of the rectum has been met with. The disease, moreover, according to Virchow, whilst being extremely rare in the human subject, is somewhat commonly observed in the horse. Ball thinks that where linear proctotomy—an operation strongly advocated by Verneuil—is sufficient to overcome the obstruction in cases of rectal cancer, this procedure is much to be preferred to colotomy, because its performance exposes the patient to less risks, and the normal position of the outlet of the intestine is preserved.

The author has collected 175 cases of excision of the rectum; of these there was a mortality of 16. 5. p. c. In his opinion the operation of excision of the rectum is a thoroughly sound one, as tending to prolong life—and it may even be followed by a complete cure. The operation, he thinks, has been best described by Volkmann. (*Sammlung Klinische Vorträge*, May 13, 1878.).

The paper concludes by referring to the treatment of the peritoneum when this membrane has been accidentally wounded during the operation; the wound ought at once to be plugged with aseptic sponge, and after the removal of the disease the sponge is to be removed and the opening carefully closed with catgut.

The editor in a paper upon "three cases of ovariectomy," takes the opportunity of discussing the question of whether or not general surgeons should perform ovariectomy, or if on the other hand the operation should solely remain in the hands of practiced ovariectomists—a theory of which Mr. Lawson Tait is the most ardent supporter.

The arguments advanced in this paper against the opinion of Mr. Lawson Tait are most cogent, if not convincing. But, then, after all, there can scarcely be many persons who require to be convinced that ovariectomy comes as much within the domain of general surgery as lithotomy, internal urethrotomy or any other special operation.

Mr. H. R. Swanzy in a paper on the transplantation of skin flaps without pedicle for the cure of cicatricial ectropion, gives the notes of seven instances in which he has performed this operation, and, in some remarks upon the expediency of the procedure, points out that the wounded surface of the eyelid should be made as extensive as possible, in order to allow for the subsequent shrinking of the flap which is almost inevitable; that it is much better to do without sutures if possible, as they nearly always cause suppuration, but fine silk sutures are best if only applied in numbers sufficient to fix the flap; that carbolic acid dressing is a mistake, the best dressings, and lotions being of boracic acid, and sero-sublimate. There are two papers upon the treatment of flat foot, one by Mr. William Stokes in which the treatment by astragaloid osteotomy is advocated, and the other by Mr. Kendal Franks who states it as his belief that Ogston's operation will become established as the best means of dealing with those cases of flat foot which do not yield to palliative treatment inasmuch as the operation removes the deformity itself. Mr. W. I. Wheeler narrates in detail two cases, one of complete excision of the clavicle for osteo-sarcoma, the other of partial excision of this bone for necrosis. Both cases did well. The same surgeon has another contribution, viz: Upon resection of the humerus at the shoulder joint. In this operation he prefers the longitudinal incision through the deltoid muscles. Three cases are recorded, in each of which, a successful result was obtained.

Papers upon "Condylotomy by the Osteotome for Knock-Knee" by R. L. Swan; "Some Cases of Knee Surgery, by Mr. John R. Barton; the "Treatment of Stricture by Internal Urethrotomy," by Mr. William Thornby Stoker, complete the surgical section. In the pathological section there are several interesting papers, such as "Tar Cancer," by Dr. C. B. Ball; "Epithelioma of the Eyelid resulting from irritation by crude carbolic acid," by J. B. Story, and "Note on Tubercle of the Tonsils," by Mr. P. S. Abraham. In regard to the number of communications, this sec-

tion is by far the largest in the volume, and surgeons will find in it much which is worthy of record, and much which tends to maintain the high standard of the papers which have been selected to form the third volume of these transactions.

H. PERCY DUNN.

**SURGICAL HANDICRAFT.** A manual of surgical manipulations, minor surgery, and other matters connected with the work of house surgeons and surgical dressers. (223 illustrations). By WALTER PYE, F. R. C. S., Surgeon to St. Mary's Hospital, etc. Second edition. London: H. Kimpton.

We reviewed this book on its first appearance last year, and we have much pleasure in noticing that as regards the defects which we then pointed out, the author has, in the new edition, energetically set himself to put things right. We offer him our congratulations on the well-deserved success of his work, and we recommend it heartily to both students and practitioners.

C. B. KEETLEY.